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USAID Newsletter

Regional

USAID Helps Mark the World AIDS Day

Around World AIDS Day that is traditionally marked on December 1, the USAID-funded CAPACITY project helped its national partners throughout Central Asia raise awareness on this important issue. To address HIV/AIDS prevention, CAPACITY helped organize events including presentations by pop singers, showing of documentaries, competitions on the knowledge of HIV prevention and control for medical personnel, as well as training courses for high-school teachers and students across the region.



In Kyrgyzstan, USAID's project helped organize a public march for HIV/AIDS awareness. Photo: CAPACITY

Kazakhstan



USAID's project will help *Damu* develop small and medium businesses. Photo: USAID

USAID's Project to Cooperate with the Kazakh Entrepreneurship Development Fund

In November 2008, USAID's Kazakhstan Small Business Development Project and the Kazakhstan Entrepreneurship Development Fund *Damu* signed an agreement on joint activities over the next 12 months. In support of small business development, USAID's project will help *Damu* create a network of entrepreneurship development centers across the country, disseminate best worldwide business practices, design an assistance program for the participation of small and medium enterprises in government tenders, and create a credit guarantee program.

Kyrgyzstan

USAID Marks Its 15th Anniversary in Kyrgyzstan

On December 4, over 200 representatives from the Kyrgyz Government, local businesses, non-governmental organizations, and media gathered in Bishkek to celebrate "15 Years of Partnership between USAID and Kyrgyzstan." The event, set in Bishkek's beautiful Opera House, included a comprehensive exhibition of materials and products from various projects, a newly-produced map of USAID's activities throughout the country, and multiple testimonials about USAID's work. The event reached people across the country through its coverage in 19 print articles and TV programs.



USAID country and regional staff at the anniversary celebration. Photo: USAID



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\$300,000 for Winter Wheat Seeds

To ensure sufficient production of wheat, the major food staple in Kyrgyzstan, USAID allocated \$300,000 for 275 metric tons of winter wheat seeds during 2008-2009. The seeds are being distributed by USAID's Kyrgyz Agro-Input Enterprise Development Project, implemented by IFDC, in cooperation with the Kyrgyz Association of Agro-businessmen (AAK), the Seed Association, and the Cooperative Union. According to official sources, each year, the country falls short by 11,000-16,000 metric tons of quality seed. The farmers can purchase the seeds through the USAID-supported network of AAK stores with a 25% subsidy to encourage the buyer preference to these quality seeds. The funds generated from seed sales will be used to establish a revolving seed fund to finance future seed purchases and expand the quality seed varieties in the country.



To improve the seed quality, USAID funds demonstration fields. Photo: IFDC

New Taxpayers Charter on Taxpayers' Rights and Responsibilities

In December the Kyrgyz Republic's State Committee on Taxes and Fees adopted the Taxpayers Charter developed with assistance from the USAID Economic Reforms to Enhance Competitiveness Project. The Taxpayers Charter is based on the new Tax Code and will help individuals and businesses understand and meet their tax obligations as well as receive their entitlements. The Charter outlines basic taxpayer's rights, basic obligations of the taxpayer, and the services and standards that the citizens can expect when dealing with tax services. The Kyrgyz Republic's State Committee on Taxes and Fees is the second public body to adopt a Taxpayers Charter in the CIS, after Kazakhstan.



The Charter explains Kyrgyz taxpayer's rights and responsibilities. Photo: USAID

Server Room at State Committee on Taxes and Fees

As part of USAID assistance to modernize and reform administration of taxes, a new computer server room was opened at the Kyrgyzstan State Tax Inspectorate. The USAID Economic Reforms to Enhance Competitiveness Project is helping the Inspectorate develop the Kyrgyz Integrated Tax Information System and will help create network connections and provide computers and software for pilot offices. The system will then be extended by the government to all tax offices throughout the country.



USAID is helping the Kyrgyz Government computerize tax system. Photo: USAID

Tajikistan

USAID to Provide Additional Food Assistance in Tajikistan

This autumn, USAID provided 475 metric tons of wheat seed to the poorest communities in the Kurgan Tube and Kulob Areas to help vulnerable families and individuals survive the coming winter and cultivate food for next spring. The seed are being distributed through USAID's implementing partner Save the



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Children that has experience administering similar food and cash assistance programs. Each recipient family is selected through stringent criteria and community reviews to ensure that assistance reaches those that are in the most dire need. This assistance will reach nearly 10,000 beneficiary families, each of whom will receive 50 kilograms of seed.

Tajik Civil Society Participates in the National Budget Development for the First Time

Tajikistan's state budget was always developed behind closed doors, and taxpayers were kept away from the process. This year, however, the USAID and PACT's Civic Initiatives Support Program, in cooperation with the public association *Amonat*, succeeded in infusing transparency in the process. The initiative not only informed the population on how the budget was formed, but trained both the government representatives and public organizations on how this process can be effectively organized in the future. *Amonat* worked to involve various government structures in information-sharing and carried a large-scale public information campaign that reached at least 50% of the population. The campaign included TV debates, press articles, public roundtables, and seminars for the staff from various government structures, mass media, representatives of public associations, and community activists.



USAID provides food to help the poorest Tajiks cope with the winter. Photo: USAID



Representatives from the Government and the civil society discuss the budget. Photo: PACT

Tajikistan's Public Organizations Seek to Participate in the Implementation of the Country's National Development Program

With funding from the USAID and PACT's Civic Initiatives Support Program, 12 leading Tajikistan's public organizations developed and submitted for adoption a law "About the participation of civil society organizations in monitoring of midterm development programs of Tajikistan". The initiative seeks to include Tajikistan's civil society in the monitoring of the country's poverty reduction strategy and the 2007-2009 Tajikistan socio-economic development program. The draft was widely discussed with other international donors, public organizations and with representatives of Tajikistan ministries which are responsible for monitoring of these programs. Civil society participation will increase transparency when development programs are developed and implemented, thereby encouraging government bodies to make more responsible decisions.



NGOs discuss the draft law on the country's development program. Photo: PACT

Health Initiative Improves Coordination, Increases Effectiveness

An electronic database, developed with support of the USAID-funded Internet Access and Training Program, has enabled the Committee for Youth, Sport, and Tourism of Tajikistan to improve monitoring of its nationwide HIV/AIDS



USAID helps organize HIV/AIDS prevention among the Tajik youths. Photo: DDRP



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initiative. With funding from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, the committee is implementing the Prevention of HIV/AIDS among the Rural Youth of Tajikistan Project in 50 districts of the country. Due to its large number of activities and volunteers, the Committee was struggling to monitor and analyze its activities and develop reports. The USAID-funded Internet Access and Training Project taught computer skills to the Committee's employees, helped create the Committee's website <http://www.kjvs.freenet.tj/>, and helped it design a nationwide database to monitor its work.

Turkmenistan

A USAID-Supported Group Becomes the First Community-Based NGO Registered in the Country

After three years of continuous attempts, this autumn, a USAID-supported group of gardeners in the Ruhabat Saglyk Village obtained its registration to become a public organization. This is believed to be the first non-governmental organization (NGO) registered by the Ministry of Justice since 2005 and the first community-based NGO registered in the country. The group is comprised of over 1,000 owners of small garden allotments outside Ashgabat that, during the Soviet period, were distributed to city dwellers for after-work gardening and recreation. USAID's Community Empowerment Program, implemented by Counterpart International, has been helping the group to register, organize activities, and carry out priority initiatives. USAID's funding helped the community renovate its water system, pave local road, and arrange its work. As a public association, the organization can now collect fees for services from its members and work with local authorities to resolve social and economic issues of their members.



The leader of the association is happy that their persistence has paid off. Photo: USAID



A doctor tries using the new microscope donated by USAID. Photo: Project HOPE

Microscopes will Ensure Prompt Tuberculosis (TB) Diagnostics In Remote Areas Of Turkmenistan

USAID and Project HOPE presented 19 binocular microscopes to the Ministry of Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan to support the implementation of the National Tuberculosis Program. The microscopes will be delivered to peripheral laboratories in the Ahal, Lebap, and Mary provinces. With the donation, rural TB centers will be able to diagnose infectious forms of TB locally, begin treatment of confirmed cases more rapidly, and prevent infection spread. Project HOPE, with funding from USAID, trained laboratory specialists to use the new microscopes and will continue to support their work. The donation of these microscopes – along with trainings and past donations

of laboratory equipment and consumables – is part of Project HOPE and the USAID's comprehensive strategy to strengthen the capacity of tuberculosis laboratories in Turkmenistan.